

Religion Data of Census 2011: V

Reversal of the imbalance in a difficult border region: JHARKHAND

Southeastern part of Bihar, comprising the Purnia region, and Jharkhand mark the beginning of the eastern border region of India that has been undergoing rapid religious demographic transformation for several decades. In the latest decade of 2001-11, the share of Indian Religionists in the population has declined much more rapidly than the national average in parts of Jharkhand, and more so in West Bengal and Assam to the east of it. Even so, in many regions and districts of Jharkhand, Indian Religionists, particularly Hindus, have registered higher growth than the Muslims and Christians during this decade. The growth rate of Indian Religionists in Jharkhand has in fact slightly increased during 2001-11, while that of Muslims and Christians has declined significantly from the very high levels they registered in 1991-2001. That is why we are including Jharkhand with Bihar, in the region of tentative recovery of the balance, rather than with West Bengal and Assam, where the imbalance has worsened further. The recovery is perhaps even more impressive in Jharkhand than in Bihar.

In Jharkhand, persons counted under the category of Other Religions and Persuasions (ORPs) form a significant proportion of the population, and their share keeps varying widely from decade to decade. In order to understand the direction of demographic change in the State, it is necessary to work with the category of Indian Religionists (IRs) which includes both Hindus and ORPs, as also Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and those counted under RNS. We give detailed data for all these separately in a subsequent post.

IR share continues to decline but at a slower rate

The share of Indian Religionists in Jharkhand has gone down from 82.09 percent in 2001 to 81.17 percent in 2011. This

Percent Share of Different Communities, 1951-2011

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
IR	87.79	86.45	85.30	84.75	84.10	82.09	81.17
Muslim	8.09	9.38	10.35	11.26	12.18	13.85	14.53
Christian	4.12	4.17	4.35	3.99	3.72	4.06	4.30

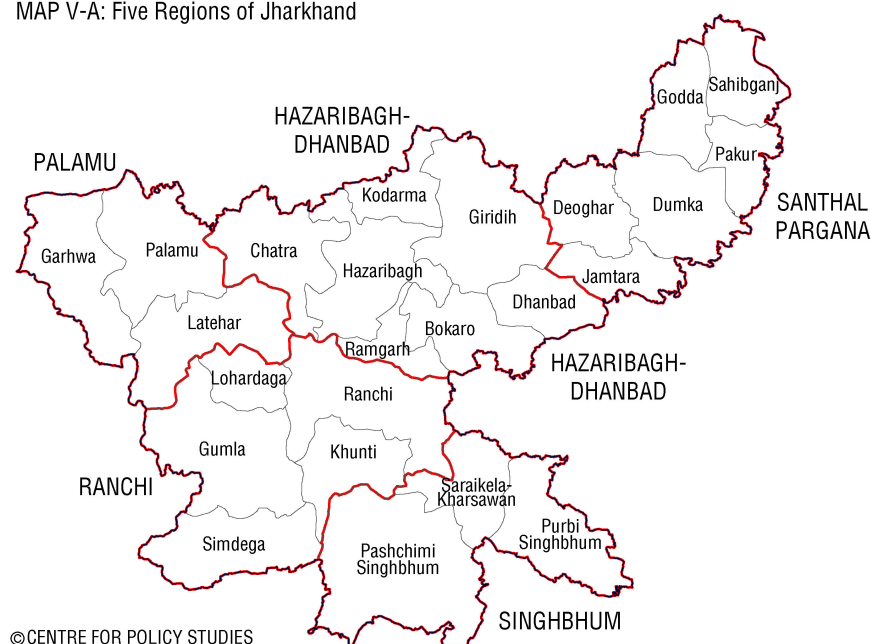
decline of 0.93 percentage points is more than the average decline of 0.74 percentage points that the IR have seen in the country as a whole. But it is much lower than the decline of 2.01 percentage points that took place in the State in the previous decade. As seen in the Table here, there has been a long-term trend of decline in the IR share in the area that now forms Jharkhand. In the six decades between 1951 and 2011, their share has declined by more than 6.62 percentage points. The decline that occurred in the previous decade was the largest since Independence; that trend of steep decline has been partly arrested in 2001-11.

Corresponding to the decline of 0.93 percentage points in the IR share during 2001-11, the share of Muslims has increased by 0.68 and that of Christian by 0.24 percentage points. Rise in the Muslim share during the previous decade was much higher at 1.67 percentage points. Since 1951, the share of Muslims in the State has increased by 6.44 percentage points; the share of Christians has been varying from decade to decade, but has remained nearly unchanged at around 4 percent.

Five regions of Jharkhand

To comprehend the trends of religious demographic change in Jharkhand, it is instructive to look at different regions of the State separately. Jharkhand can be divided into five distinct regions, corresponding to the earlier undivided districts of Palamu, Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, Santhal Pargana, Ranchi and Singhbhum. The current districts comprising these five regions are shown in Map V-A. Religious demography of the five regions is quite different, though there are wide differences in some of the districts within a region also. Below we discuss the spread and growth of Muslims, Christians and Indian Religionists in different regions and districts of Jharkhand.

MAP V-A: Five Regions of Jharkhand



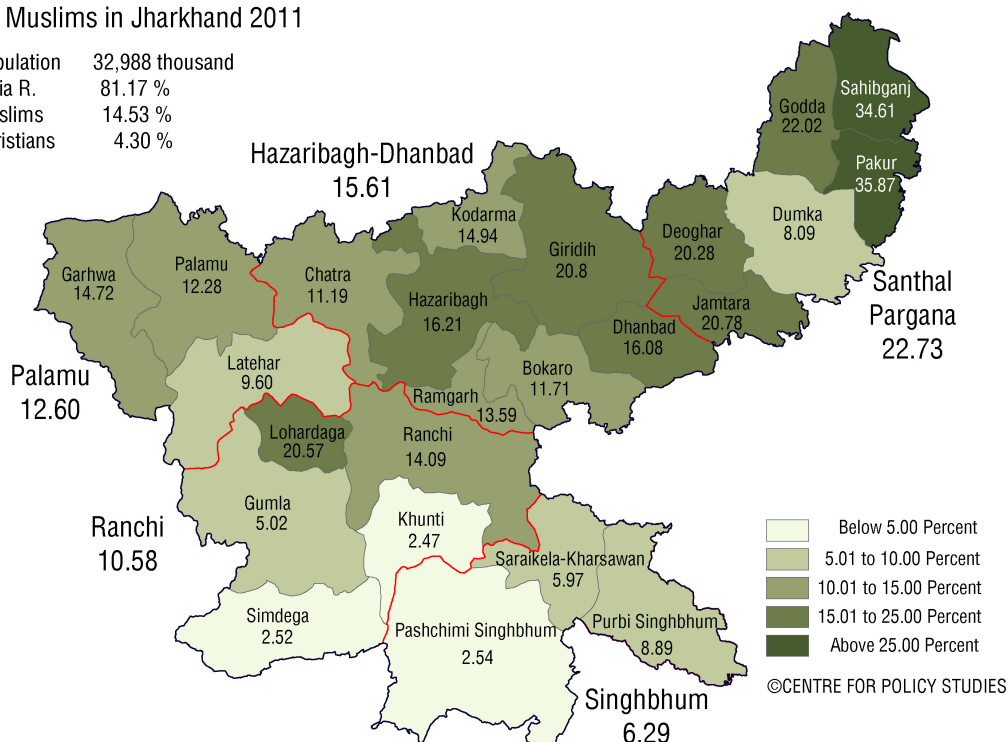
Share and Growth of Muslims

Share of Muslims in different regions

The share of Muslims in the districts and regions of Jharkhand is shown in Map V-B below.

Map V-B: Muslims in Jharkhand 2011

Population 32,988 thousand
 India R. 81.17 %
 Muslims 14.53 %
 Christians 4.30 %



As seen in the Map, Muslims in Jharkhand are concentrated particularly in Santhal Pargana, where their share in the population in 2011 is 22.73 percent. The region accommodates almost exactly one-third of the nearly 48 lakh Muslims in Jharkhand, while it has only one-fifth of the total population of 3.3 crore. Santhal Pargana—especially the two districts of Sahibganj and Pakur with the highest share of Muslims at 34.6 and 35.9 percent, respectively—lies near the Bangladesh border and is separated from it only by a thin strip of land lying in Maldah and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal.

There is significant presence of Muslims in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad and Palamu regions also, where they form 15.6 and 12.6 percent of the population, respectively. Within these regions, their presence is the highest in Giridih, which immediately adjoins Deogarh and Jamtara districts of Santhal Pargana.

Rise in Muslim Share since 1951

The Table here gives the changing share of Muslims from 1951 to 2001. Muslims in Jharkhand are concentrated particularly in Santhal Pargana, where their share in the population in 2011 is 22.73 percent. The region accommodates almost exactly one-third of the nearly 48 lakh Muslims

Share of Muslims in the Regions of Jharkhand, 1951-2011

	Palamu	Hazaribagh-Dhanbad	Santhal-Pargana	Ranchi	Singhbhum
1951	9.88	11.03	9.44	5.32	3.27
1961	9.69	11.41	13.77	5.74	3.75
1971	10.49	12.53	14.62	7.27	3.95
1981	11.13	13.04	16.44	7.78	4.56
1991	11.49	13.71	18.25	8.35	5.10
2001	12.51	15.00	20.59	10.72	6.32
2011	12.60	15.61	22.73	10.58	6.29

in Jharkhand, while it has only one-fifth of the total population of 3.3 crore. Santhal

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Pargana—especially the two districts of Sahibganj and Pakur with the highest share of Muslims at 34.6 and 35.9 percent, respectively—lies near the Bangladesh border and is separated from it only by a thin strip of land lying in Maldah and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal.

There is significant presence of Muslims in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad and Palamu regions also, where they form 15.6 and 12.6 percent of the population, respectively. Within these regions, their presence is the highest in Giridih, which immediately adjoins Deogarh and Jamtara districts of Santhal Pargana.

The presence of Muslims is relatively low in Ranchi and Singhbhum, where they form 10.6 and 6.3 percent of the population, respectively. Within these regions, their presence is relatively higher in Lohardaga (20.6%), Ranchi (14.1%) and Purbi Singhbhum (8.9%) districts. In Lohardaga, the share of Muslims had suddenly increased during the previous decade, from 14.35 percent in 1991 to 20.11 percent in 2001; the rise during 2001-11 has only been marginal.

Rise in the Muslim share since 1951

As seen in the Table above, the share of Muslims has been rising significantly in each of the five regions of the State, even in those regions where their presence is not very high. In Singhbhum and Ranchi, their share has almost doubled since 1951; in Palamu it has gone up from 9.9% in 1951 and 9.7% in 1961 to 12.6% now; in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, it has risen from 11.0% in 1951 to 15.6 percent in 2011.

The most spectacular rise in the share of Muslims, however, has taken place in Santhal Pargana: they had a share of just 9.4 percent in the population of the region in 1951; their share in 2011 is 22.7 percent. Since Independence and Partition, the population of Muslims in this region has multiplied by 7.3 times from 2.19 in 1951 to 15.84 lakh in 2011, while that of Indian Religionists has grown by a factor of 2.4, from 21.0 to 50.9 lakh.

The rise stalls except in Santhal Pargana

The most remarkable aspect of the data compiled in the Table above, however, is the stalling of the long-term rise in Muslim share in at least 3 of the 5 regions of the State. In Ranchi and Singhbhum, where the presence of Muslims is the lowest among all the regions, the proportion of Muslims has actually declined between 2001 and 2011. In Palamu, the Muslim share has remained almost unchanged. It is only in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad and Santhal Pargana that the rise in Muslim share during 2001-11 seems to have followed the long-term trend. But the accretion of 0.61 percentage points in the former is much lower than the rise of 1.29 percentage points in the Muslim share that occurred in this region in the previous decade of 1991-2001. In Santhal Pargana, however, the share of Muslims has increased by 2.14 percentage points, which is similar to the rise of about 2 percentage points that the Muslims have been registering for the past several decades.

Thus, we see the pattern of Bihar repeated in Jharkhand. The growth in the share of Muslims seems to have stalled in regions where the Muslim presence is relatively lower, but their growth has remained considerably above others in the regions where they have established a high presence.

Decline in the Muslim Growth Rates

Another way to look at the stalling of the rise in Muslim share in regions other than Santhal Pargana is to look at the change in the growth rate of Muslims in Jharkhand and in the five regions of the State that we have been mentioning. In the Table here, we have compiled the rates for 1991-2001 and 2001-2011 for the

Growth Rates of Total Population and Muslims

	1991-2001		2001-2011	
	T	M	T	M
Jharkhand	23.24	40.28	22.42	28.48
Palamu	27.85	39.24	27.31	28.23
Hazaribagh-Dhanbad	24.59	36.30	20.60	25.47
Santhal-Pargana	22.03	37.67	24.40	37.37
Ranchi	22.95	57.82	23.05	21.50
Singhbhum	19.55	48.06	19.57	19.00

total and the Muslim population. As can be seen, between these two decades, Muslim growth has declined substantially in the whole State, as well as in all the regions except Santhal Pargana. This is partly because of the excessively high growth of Muslims that the State experienced during 1991-2001. But, what is even more significant is that in the Ranchi and Singhbhum regions, the growth rate of Muslims has declined below that of the total population, leading to the lowering of the share of Muslims in these two regions. In Palamu, the growth rate of Muslims has come very near the total; the share of Muslims in that region has remained almost unchanged.

In Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, the growth rate of Muslims has declined substantially from 36.3 to 25.5 percent, but Muslim growth in 2001-11 remains considerably above that of the total population at 20.6 percent. In this region, the share of Muslims has increased significantly from 15.0 to 15.6 percent.

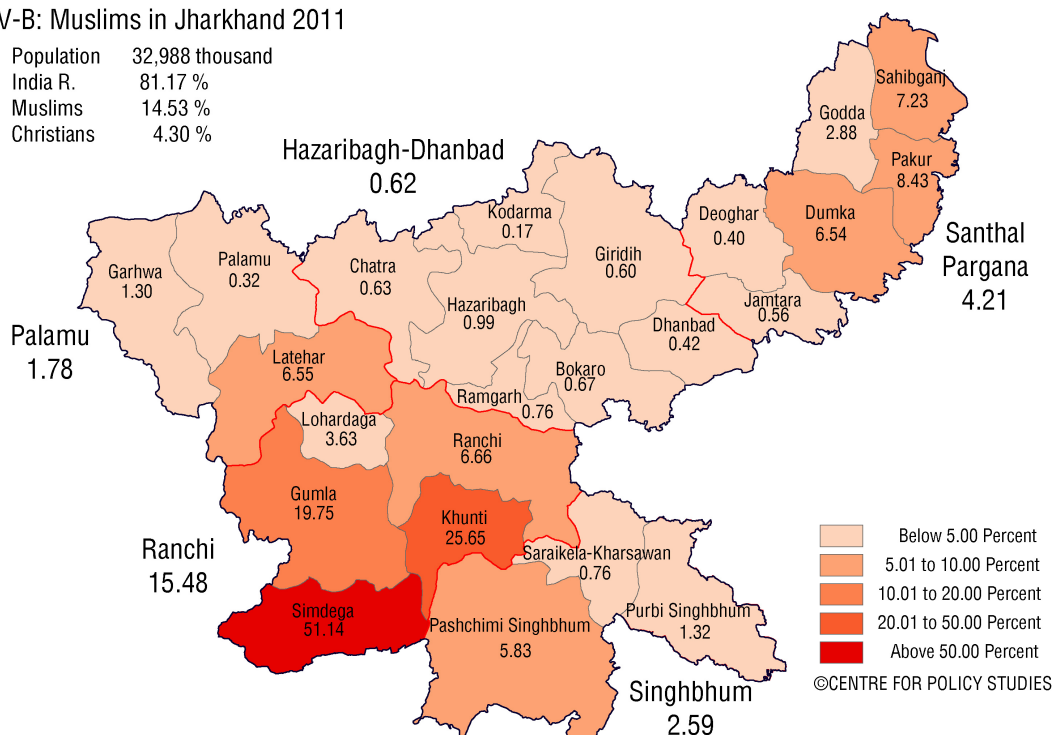
In Santhal Pargana, however, the growth of Muslims in 2001-11 has been almost exactly the same as in 1991-2001. Perhaps because of the high growth of Muslims, the growth rate of the total population has also increased as compared to the previous decade. The gap between the growth rate of Muslims (24.4%) and the total population (37.4%), however, remains very high. The share of Muslims in this border region of high and growing Muslim presence has increased from 20.59 to 22.73 percent.

Share and Growth of Christians

Share of Christians in different regions

Share of Christians in the districts and regions of Jharkhand is shown in Map V-C below:

Map V-B: Muslims in Jharkhand 2011



Growth in the share of Christians

The Table here gives growth of the Christian share in different regions since 1951. Christians in Jharkhand are concentrated mainly in the Ranchi region; of the total of 14 lakh Christians in the State, 8.6 lakhs are in this region. The share of Christians here has been slowly declining since 1951;

Share of Christians in Different Regions, 1951-2011

	Palamu	Hazaribagh- Dhanbad	Santhal- Pargana	Ranchi	Singhbhum
1951	1.39	0.53	0.18	18.24	1.75
1961	1.67	0.34	1.14	17.71	2.07
1971	1.79	0.59	1.55	17.70	2.23
1981	1.88	0.53	1.64	16.57	2.26
1991	1.76	0.57	1.68	15.71	2.18
2001	1.91	0.63	3.24	15.42	2.41
2011	1.78	0.62	4.21	15.48	2.59

for the first time since Independence, they have registered a slight improvement in their share in this latest decade of 2001-11. The decline was mainly because of the consistent increase in the share of Muslims in this region that we have noticed above; the slight rise seen now is because for the first time since Independence, the share of Muslims in this region has shown a slight decline. As we shall see below, the share of Indian Religionists in this region has also marginally improved in this decade.

Newly formed high Christian presence districts

Within the Ranchi region, Christian presence is high in Simdega (51.1%), Khunti (25.7%) and Gumla (19.8%). Simdega and Khunti have been newly carved out of Gumla and Ranchi, respectively. Gumla was carved out earlier in 1991 from Ranchi; at that time, Christians formed nearly one-third of the population of this district. Bifurcation of Gumla has now created the first Christian majority district in central India.

This process of carving out niche districts with a dominating presence of either the Muslims or Christians has been going on in different parts of India almost

continuously. The more obvious examples are of Malappuram in Kerala, Gajapati in Orissa, Mewat in Haryana, and now Simdega in Jharkhand.

Christians in Santhal Pargana

After Ranchi, the highest presence of Christians is in Santhal Pargana; and, unlike in Ranchi, the share of Christians in this region has been consistently rising. The rise has been especially steep after 1991; between 1991 and 2001, their share in the region rose from 1.68 to 3.24 percent and it has risen again to 4.21 percent in 2011. In 1951, there was almost no Christian presence in Santhal Pargana.

Within Santhal Pargana, the Christian share is particularly high in Sahbibganj, Pakur and Dumka, the three districts where the Muslim share is also very high. In this region, the Indian Religionists have been losing their share to both Muslims and Christians. Within Santhal Pargana, the Christian share is particularly high in Sahbibganj, Pakur and Dumka, the three districts where the Muslim share is also very high.

Christians in other regions

Christian presence has been slowly growing in the Singhbhum region. During 2001-11, their share in the population has increased marginally from 2.41 to 2.59 percent. Within this region, their presence is the highest in Pashchimi Singhbhum; in this district, they now form 5.83 percent of the population compared to 5.13 percent in 2001.

In Palamu and Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, the Christian presence is low and has been varying from decade to decade. During 2001-11, their share in both regions has marginally declined.

Within these two regions, the Christian presence is significant only in the newly created Latehar district. The district has been carved out from Palamu; and of the 54 thousand Christians in undivided Palamu, 48 thousand have come to the share of Latehar. Christian share in the population of Latehar is 6.55 percent. Their share in all other districts of these two regions is below 1 percent, except in Garhwa, where they form 1.30 percent of the population.

Decline in the Christian Growth Rates

Another way to comprehend the slowing of the growth of Christian share in different regions of Jharkhand, except Santhal Pargana, is to look at the changing growth rate of Christians over the last two decades. As can be seen in the Table here, the growth rate of Christians has declined substantially in Palamu and in

Growth Rates of Total Population and Christians

	1991-2001		2001-2011	
	T	C	T	C
Jharkhand	23.24	34.53	22.42	29.74
Palamu	27.85	39.19	27.31	18.48
Hazaribagh-Dhanbad	24.59	37.34	20.60	17.99
Santhal-Pargana	22.03	136.1	24.40	61.70
Ranchi	22.95	20.68	23.05	23.52
Singhbhum	19.55	32.07	19.57	28.70

Hazaribagh-Dhanbad. In both these regions, the Christian growth in 2001-11 is below the average growth of the total population of the region. In Santhal Pargana, also the growth rate has declined from the unusually high 136 percent during 1991-2001 to

61.7 percent in 2001-11. But the latter rate is still far above the average growth of population in this region. Contrary to the trend, the growth rate of Christians in Ranchi is higher in 2001-11 than in 1991-2001. Their growth rate was below the average of the region in 1991-2001, it is slightly above the average now. In Singhbhum, there has been some decline in the growth rate of Christians, but it remains above the average of the region, which itself has increased slightly as compared to the rate in 1991-2001.

Share and Growth of Indian Religionists

Changing share of IR since 1951

The share of Indian Religionists is rather low in Ranchi and Santhal-Pargana regions, where they form 73.94 and 73.05 percent of the population. In Singhbhum, their proportion is much higher at 91.12 percent. In Palamu and Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, their share is 85.62 and 83.78 percent, respectively.

Share of IR in Different Regions of Jharkhand, 1951-2011

	Palamu	Hazaribagh- Dhanbad	Santhal- Pargana	Ranchi	Singhbhum
1951	88.73	88.44	90.38	76.44	94.97
1961	88.64	88.25	85.10	76.55	94.18
1971	87.73	86.88	83.83	75.03	93.82
1981	86.99	86.42	81.91	75.65	93.18
1991	86.76	85.72	80.08	75.94	92.72
2001	85.58	84.37	76.17	73.87	91.28
2011	85.62	83.78	73.05	73.94	91.12

IR share has been declining in all five regions

In all five regions, the share of Indian Religionists has been falling more or less consistently. The decline is the most steep in Santhal Pargana, where the share of IR has come down from 90.38 percent in 1951 to 73.05 percent in 2011; of this decline of 17.33 percentage points, 13.29 percentage points have accrued to the share of Muslims and 4.03 percentage points to the share of Christians. The fall of 3.91 percentage points in the share of IR during 1991-2001 was the steepest since 1951-61; during 2001-11 also, the loss in the IR share has been fairly high at 3.12 percentage points.

The decline in the share of IR in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad region also has been significant and consistent from decade to decade, though the volume of decline is not comparable to Santhal Pargana. That trend of steady decline has continued during 2001-11 also.

In Singhbhum, there has been a slow decline up to 1991. The IR share declined steeply by 1.44 percentage points in 2001. During 2001-11, there has been only a marginal decline of 0.16 percentage points.

Reversal of the trend in Ranchi and Palamu

In Palamu, as in Singhbhum, there was an unusually steep decline of 1.18 percentage points in the share of IR during 1991-2001. During 2001-11, the IR share has actually registered a slight gain. In the Ranchi region also, the IR share has slightly increased during 2001-11; but in this region, IR share had shown a rising trend earlier in 1981 and 1991 also, before undergoing a steep decline of more than 2 percentage points in the previous decade.

Rise in IR Growth Rates

Unlike the Christians and Muslims, the growth rate of Indian Religionists in Jharkhand has increased as compared to the last decade, though it remains below the growth rates of both Christians and Muslims and the average growth rate of the total population. The growth rate of IR during 2001-11 has surpassed the growth during the previous

Growth Rates of Total Population and IR

	1991-2001		2001-2011	
	T	IR	T	IR
Jharkhand	23.24	20.28	22.42	21.04
Palamu	27.85	26.11	27.31	27.37
Hazaribagh-Dhanbad	24.59	22.63	20.60	19.76
Santhal-Pargana	22.03	16.07	24.40	19.30
Ranchi	22.95	19.59	23.05	23.18
Singhbhum	19.55	17.68	19.57	19.36

decade of 1991-2001 in all regions, except Hazaribagh-Dhanbad. It, however, remains below the growth rate of the total population in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, Santhal Pargana and Singhbhum. In Palamu and Ranchi, the IR growth rate is marginally above the growth of the total population. In Singhbhum, it is slightly below. In Hazaribagh-Dhanbad, the IR growth is about 0.84 percentage points below the growth of total population. The gap of growth between the IR and the total population in Santhal Pargana is however quite wide. These differences are reflected in the changes in the share of IR that we have discussed above. But, the recovery of the growth of IR in this border and difficult region of India is clearly visible in the Table above.

Summary of the situation

The religious demographic profile of Jharkhand shows the three major communities, the Muslims, Christians and the Indian Religionists contending for space in different regions of the State. In Santhal Pargana, the share of Indian Religionists continues to decline rapidly, while both Muslims and Christians keep recording robust growth. In Hazaribagh-Dhanbad region, Muslims continue to grow faster than others, though the gap seems to be diminishing. In Palamu, the Muslim growth advantage has been largely neutralised and Christian growth has fallen behind others; as a result, the share of IR in the region has improved, though only marginally. In the Ranchi region also the growth of Muslims has slowed down, leading to a slight improvement in the share of both Christians and IRs. In Singhbhum, the share of both Muslims and Christians has increased marginally, while that of IR has slightly declined. In fact, the rise or decline in the share of different communities has only been slight in all regions, except Santhal Pargana. The rise of Muslim share and decline of IR in Hazaribagh-Dhanbad is also somewhat significant, though nowhere near what has happened in Santhal Pargana.

Thus, in Jharkhand, as in Bihar, the Indian Religionists seem to have reversed the long-established trend of continuous decline in their share. The position of Jharkhand in this regard is even more remarkable than Bihar, because in Jharkhand, the Indian Religionists have to contend for demographic space with both the Muslims and the Christians. And, in this contention, they seem to have begun reversing the trends of continuous and all around decline quite decisively.

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Indian Religionists here include those counted as adherents of Other Religions and Persuasions (ORPs), whose numbers have been changing from decade to decade. In the next post, we shall discuss the relative situation of different groups counted within the category of IR. We shall also talk about some of the individual districts where the share of one or the other of the major communities has undergone unusual change.

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